

Dr. Craig Keener, Acts, Lecture 1, Authorship, Date and Genre

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This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Acts. This is session 1, Authorship, Date, and Genre.

We have many letters in the New Testament that show us how particular problems were dealt with.

We have the Gospels that show us more of the life of our Lord. But we have one book in the New Testament that actually portrays in a narrative way, the life of the early church. The theme of the book is the mission of the early church, and how they carried on Jesus' mission and followed his great commission.

We find this in the book of Acts. And we're going to start the book of Acts with a significantly long introduction to raise the major themes. And then we'll go through and sample in somewhat less detail certain parts of the book of Acts.

The book of Acts, we might call it Luke part two, because it's very significant how the gospel of Luke is carried on in the book of Acts. The gospel of Luke is all that Jesus began to do and teach. And the book of Acts shows how Jesus continued to work through his followers.

Well, Acts tells us the beginning of many of the churches. And therefore, it's useful when considering the background for Paul's letters. For example, Romans was to a mixed church, once consisting only of Gentiles.

Thessalonians to a largely Gentile church persecuted for believing in another king, one Jesus. Well, Athenians, that didn't make it into the canon. But in any case, we get background on many of the letters, even though that wasn't the original purpose of Acts.

It helps us in that way. Let's start by looking at the question of the authorship of Acts. We really can't address the authorship of Acts without looking at the we narratives.

The majority of scholars think that the we narratives were authored by a companion of Paul. And there's good reason for that. But some scholars demur.

And there are also reasons for that. You can tell where I stand because I said good reasons for one and I just said reasons for the other. But in any case, the narratives are far more detailed in the we section.

There are more details on the few weeks spent in Philippi than the lengthy stays in Corinth, 18 months and over two years in Ephesus. Also, where the we begin and where the we leaves off. In 1610 and following, we find that the we begin moving from Troas to Philippi.

After Paul and Silas leave Philippi, the we break off. But years later, when Paul comes back to Philippi in Acts chapter 20, the we picks up again and continues basically until the end of the book of Acts, whenever there's any travel. The we stays in the background.

The first person is only mentioned where necessary to include himself without elaborating by mentioning himself, mentioning what he was doing. He's just included in the group. Now, some people have taken the we to be other than what we normally take we to mean.

We normally means myself plus someone else. But, you know, as scholars, we make our living by making complicated things simple. And unfortunately, sometimes by making simple things complicated.

So, I need to address these other views about we. Some say it must be a fictitious we. The reason is, is because they think that Luke's depiction of Paul's thinking differs from the depiction of Paul's thinking in Paul's letters.

Well, there's some truth in that. Nobody says that Paul wrote the book of Acts. Obviously, Luke is a different person.

But he's not so much of a different person that we must assume that he couldn't have known him or couldn't have traveled with him. After all, if one of my students were to write a biography of my life, and, you know, you'd see what they choose to emphasize, what they would choose to emphasize about me would be different from probably what I would choose to emphasize about me. In fact, the leading difference that scholars have often seen between Luke's depiction of Paul's theology and Paul's own depiction of Paul's theology is that they say that, well, in Acts, Paul is favorable towards the law, whereas in Paul's letters, Paul is against the law.

Well, that's a very tendentious reading of Paul. I won't say historically where it came from, but I will say that in the past few decades, the majority of Pauline scholars have repudiated that view. They no longer say that Paul was against the law.

Therefore, scholars of Acts who are using that contrast to try to distinguish Luke's Paul from Paul's Paul need to catch up on their Pauline scholarship. But in any case, why do they assume it's a fictitious we? We have fictitious we's or fictitious I's in fictitious documents, such as novels. We do not have fictitious we's or fictitious I's

normally in historical works, which the majority of scholars agree that the book of Acts is.

Not all agree on how historical it is, but the majority agree that Acts is a historical monograph. And it's a work of ancient historiography. The famous early 20th century Harvard classicist, Sir Arthur Darby Nock, said that at most he could think of one example in historical literature, in non-fictitious literature, where a first-person plural or first-person period was used fictitiously.

In almost all cases in historical works, a first-person meant that the author was claiming to be there or the author was claiming to be writing or something like that. Moreover, if it were fictitious, why would it be fictitious only at these places so that it leaves off in Philippi and picks up in Philippi? And it's such obscure places. I mean, you would think that the we would have carried through the entire narrative.

The we could have been a disciple of Jesus. The we could have been present at the empty tomb. The we could have been present at Pentecost.

But the author can't say that because apparently the audience knows who the author is and they know when the author was with Paul and when the author wasn't with Paul. The we appears in a very obscure way. The author is not trying to make a big deal about being present.

The author is simply including himself at points where the author was present. Some say it's not fictitious, although some have said, well, you have this fictitious presence of a we in sea voyages. That has been very strongly answered by scholars who've shown that most we voyages don't have a we in them.

When the we is there, normally it's because the author was claiming to be there. And outside of sea voyages, it's the same as inside of sea voyages. So the majority of scholars have rejected that approach.

But some scholars have said, okay, it's not fictitious. It belongs to a travel journal. And that's entirely possible.

It's possible that it belongs to a Keep in mind, Luke, at the beginning of his first volume, mentions many possible sources. He mentions getting material that goes back to eyewitnesses. Presumably, a lot of the material that came to him could have come in first-person form.

And yet nowhere else does he preserve a first-person form. Why would Luke become an inept editor of this material at this point, and at this point only? Doesn't it seem more likely that if there was a travel journal that was in use, it was Luke's own travel

journal? So, if it was a travel journal, including we, it would have been Luke's travel journal. In other ancient literature, we normally means we, just like it does today.

So instead of complicating with simple, we'll just leave it simple. And usually, I can say I'm in a strong consensus of scholarship. At this point, there is debate.

But personally, I think that the case is strong enough that I'm going to say I think this is a really strong case. But who was this companion that is presupposed in the we? Who is this first-person voice? Well, we know of certain people who went with Paul.

In Colossians 4.10 and in Philemon 24, he mentions Aristarchus being with him in Rome. However, Aristarchus is specifically distinguished from the first person in Acts chapter 27. So, this is somebody who was with Aristarchus and Paul but was not Aristarchus.

It could be Epaphras. Epaphras is also with Paul in Rome, but there's no interest shown here in the Lycus Valley. You would think Epaphras, whose home church where he labored the most, was in the Lycus Valley. You'd think that would show up somewhere in the Book of Acts, but there's no interest in the Lycus Valley there.

Demas was also with Paul in Rome, but tradition says that he didn't persevere. 2 Timothy chapter 4 says, Demas has abandoned me. So, chances are he didn't write the Book of Acts.

Now there's another strong candidate who doesn't normally get mentioned, I think, and that's Titus. Titus was a close companion of Paul. And for some reason, Titus is not mentioned by name in the Book of Acts, unless he's the same person as Timothy, which a friend of mine has argued.

But I think there are compelling reasons against that personally, one of which being that we have 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus being separate. But in any case, I think Titus could be a candidate. The problem is that when Paul lists his companions in Rome, Titus is not among them.

So, there's one companion who's listed in Rome, who's not named in the Book of Acts, and that's Luke. Not surprisingly, the unanimous view of the early church was that Luke was the author of the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts. Interestingly enough, you would expect that if somebody were to make up a tradition about some author, they'd make up somebody very prominent as the author.

Luke wasn't that prominent. So, the external evidence and the internal evidence together both favor Luke as the author. And sometimes when you speak of an author of a work, you just use the traditional conventional author's name, because you don't have any better name to use.

But in this case, when I say Luke, I personally do believe that Luke was the author. Well, the tradition of authorship is very strong. Classicists normally start with the external evidence, and the external evidence here is very strong.

The tradition is Luke. The anti-Marcionite prologue actually says that this was Luke, a doctor from Antioch. Colossians 4:14 does fit Luke being a doctor, although I don't believe he was from Antioch, given what we see in the Book of Acts.

It says that he stayed single and he died in Boeotia in Greece at the age of 84. I don't know about some of those other details, but it does fit the evidence that Luke was the author. We have stronger evidence from Irenaeus in the late 2nd century, Clement of Alexandria in the late 2nd century, Origen, and Tertullian.

Now, to whomever Luke addressed in the Book of Acts and in the Gospel of Luke, they knew who the author was. He didn't have to state who he was. He can say I in the prologue.

He can say we later on. Most people who received such works knew who the author was, and it didn't have to necessarily be stated in the body. Sometimes it was, sometimes it wasn't.

And in the case of Luke, we know that at least part of his audience, his dedicatee, as part of his ideal audience, is named Theophilus. And Theophilus undoubtedly knew who the author was. So, the book didn't have to mention it, but normally the authorship was one of the last details that would be forgotten.

And so, here we're talking about a few generations where this could be passed on, and we're talking about unanimity. I mean, if it wasn't passed on accurately, you would have different hypotheses arising in different parts of the Roman Empire, but we have unanimity. Also, a papyrus, P75, from somewhere between 175 and 225 AD, calls the Gospel the Gospel of Luke, and pretty much everybody agrees that the same author wrote both Luke and Acts.

Luke was not prominent in tradition, yet the authorship tradition is unanimous. Who would invent a non-apostle and a non-eyewitness of Jesus as the author? We have no evidence against it. It fits what little we know about Luke.

Interestingly enough, although this is purely a subsidiary argument, many terms frequently found in medical literature are also found in Luke-Acts. That was pointed out by Hobart. Cadbury rightly pointed out afterward that many of these terms are also found in non-medical literature, so it doesn't really make a case for a medical author per se.

But as Cadbury pointed out, and scholars have sometimes since then neglected, well, it's consistent with a doctor being the author. Many of the early scholars who are now quoted, like Debelius and others, Cadbury, were very positive towards Luke and authorship rather than negative. Most of these terms are also found elsewhere too.

Harnack notes that and so on. But you have some more recent studies that have drawn attention, and Weiss and Leder and others have drawn attention to, well, it is consistent with the possibility of a medical author. The authorship.

The tradition is Luke. If it's by Luke, then if it's by the Luke who was with Paul, according to Colossians 4.14, he was a physician. So, I just want to say a few things about physicians.

Among ancient physicians, there was some superstition. There was also some genuine empirical data. It was all mixed together because you didn't obviously do all your own experiments on patients.

You had the traditions of what had been passed on, some of which was accurate, some of which was not accurate. You read plenty of the elders' natural history, and he's talking about supposed cures for this or for that. Some of them are, you know, you grind up the eyeballs of a rhinoceros with, you know, all these different things that just nobody's going to get a hold of, and probably nobody ever managed to try.

But in any case, there were also things, genuine observations that people made about, you know, from their experience with patients. You have some of those in Saronis' gynecology and Galen and the Hippocratic literature and so on. But there were various schools of medical thought back then.

One of them was actually called the Methodist School, no relation to Methodists today, but a number of different schools of thought, and different approaches to medicine. They didn't have MCATs. They didn't have like a test to get into medical school.

They didn't have medical schools. You would be apprenticed under another physician. Well, they did have some places where you could go for medical training, but there was no accreditation.

So, you know, some physicians might be good and some physicians might be bad. But in any case, it's agreed that this is the same author as Luke's gospel. And the style is an educated style.

It's not highly rhetorical. It's not from a member of the elite. It's on a more popular level, but it's also not from the kind of barely literate people that we have writing ordinary papyri, business documents that we find often executed by scribes.

Some people could barely sign their name. Luke is way beyond that level. Contrary to my expectations before I wrote a four-volume commentary, before I wrote the commentary, I was thinking that Luke was probably on a higher rhetorical level than Paul.

But after working through Acts and having worked through Paul's letters, I've concluded the opposite. Paul actually works in a higher rhetorical level. You didn't even need to do that normally in letters, but Paul does.

Then Luke does in the book of Acts. Nevertheless, Luke is an educated person. He's not uneducated.

He improves Mark's grammar regularly in the gospel of Luke. If we look at the author's background, assuming it's Luke, something we can know about physicians, well, physicians was one of the occupations where you had both men and women involved. So, Luke would have probably been exposed in his professional life to skilled women, which makes good sense of what we read in Luke and Acts, where he has respect for women.

He's more inclusive than most of his contemporaries back then who wrote about men and women. Often physicians were slaves. Usually, they were Greek and usually they had some education.

Yes, you could have educated slaves back then. The slave culture was different than in some other settings. Some households that had slaves actually had some well-to-do household slaves who were highly trained.

Sometimes they managed the estate for the slaveholder and so on. Some Jewish people opposed the use of physicians, and said you need to just rely on God. But urban Hellenized Jews accepted this.

And so, Luke probably would not have faced much prejudice in the areas that he normally goes to, which are normally urban, on account of his profession. There were no professional historians back then. That wasn't a normal job description.

Physicians were educated. Paul was sometimes sick. Personal physicians were usually among one's closest confidants.

So, it makes sense that a physician would have traveled with Paul. But a physician could be a historian because the physician was educated. One scholar, Professor Loveday Alexander, has argued that Luke's preface fits the kind that you would expect from a scientific author.

Therefore, not that Luke was not a historian, but that Luke was the more scientific kind rather than the more rhetorical kind. But in any case, there were no professional historians. They were orators or something else who just wrote history also.

Some put a lot of their work into writing history, but usually, they were people who had enough wealth on the side or support on the side that they could do that. Objections to Luke. Well, one of the major objections is the differences of detail from Paul's letters.

But differences in detail were allowed for historians as long as they got the events right. And when you compare other historians as they wrote about figures of antiquity and the figures about whom they wrote composed, you have the same situation that you have with Acts and Paul's letters. You have Cicero's letters.

Then you have historians who wrote about Cicero. And the situation is roughly comparable as some classicists have shown. People have said, well, Luke has apologetic agendas.

That's true. So does Paul, however. They both are writing with particular agendas.

So, the differences in detail actually are not more than what we would expect from a historian writing selectively about a person's life. A historian who has their own points that they want to emphasize. It doesn't mean that they made things up.

It means that they emphasized what they felt was most important for their own audience. Luke is writing later, I believe, than Paul's letters. So, in any case, what is really striking, I think, to a person who comes from a classical background or working from ancient historiography, and I've read the ancient historians, I've read ancient biographies, I've worked through these ancient sources and the ancient letters too, Cicero's letters, Seneca's letters, and so forth.

What is striking to me is the degree of correspondence that we have between them. Given especially the fact that Luke doesn't seem to have known most of Paul's letters. That wasn't a major source for him.

He didn't need that as a major source because he'd known Paul and he knew churches that knew Paul. And so, he had more direct information on which to rely than the letters. For example, if you were relying on Paul's letters to the Corinthians, you'd include a whole lot of things that are missing in the book of Acts and so forth.

Theological differences are another objection. And I mentioned that before. Luke is more generalizing, is less particular.

It's a matter of genre. And again, the biggest theological differences that people have pointed out actually are probably not differences. It's a matter of a misreading of Paul's letters that was being done a few generations ago.

Most of the differences are a matter of emphasis. We do have some details different, but again, by the standards of ancient historiography, these are very small. The author's background.

Well, what we can see from geography, is the geographic elements within Luke Acts. The author knows the Aegean region quite thoroughly cares about that region, and likes to report things. So probably his audience may cluster in that region or his core audience in any case, not that he wouldn't welcome other readers.

Also, he knows coastal Palestine very well. He knows the Judean coast, which fits a traveling companion of Paul. His geographic knowledge seems to become weaker on the interior of Judea and Galilee, which again would fit somebody who traveled with Paul in the areas that we read about in the book of Acts.

He didn't travel with Jesus, you know, in Luke chapters nine and following. So, arranging those details is a different matter. So probably the author is from the Aegean region.

The author's background is Jewish or Gentile. Well, if he's the Luke of Colossians 4:14, who was with Paul in Rome, then he's presumably a Gentile given the context of that passage. Although there is a Lukeus in Romans 16 who appears to be Jewish, but Jewish or Gentile.

He doesn't seem to be familiar with all Palestinian Jewish customs, Judean and Galilean customs. So, if he's Jewish, he's probably a diaspora Jew. He's probably from the Greek-speaking Mediterranean Jewish community outside of Judea and Galilee.

But he traveled to Jerusalem, according to what we see between Acts 20 and Paul's letters, we put it together, and traveled to Jerusalem among representatives of Gentile churches, diaspora churches, but Gentiles bringing these offerings. So probably he was a Gentile. He knows the Septuagint backward and forward.

So, if he's a Gentile, probably he was a God-fearer, somebody who spent time in the synagogues before his conversion to faith in Jesus as the Messiah. Although it's possible that he just learned a lot afterward. I was converted from atheism.

I had no church background. I think I'd visited a Catholic church once, but I had no real church background. And I really was limited in my knowledge of what Christians believed.

I knew they believed in the Trinity and gargoyles. They didn't know very much about Christianity. But, you know, and what I picked up, you know, just from larger society, what I'd heard about.

But after my conversion, I had to start cramming because the little kids in Sunday school knew more about the Bible than I did. So, I started reading 40 chapters of the Bible a day. If you do that, you can get through the Bible every month or the New Testament every week.

And I caught up eventually. But there's a lot of interest in God-fearers in the book of Acts. And so, it's plausible that Luke could have been a God-fearer.

And many scholars think that's the same for his target audience. We can't say with certainty whether he was Jewish or Gentile. But I'm inclined to think that he was probably a Gentile.

And because I think he's probably the Luke of Colossians 4:14. His target audience. Well, today we usually recognize that many of these major foundational works, you know, these were not works you'd write off the top of your head. Something like the book of Acts in today's currency, it would have cost thousands of dollars to produce that between the papyri and scribe and so on.

These were major works by ancient standards. So, it wasn't written off the top of one's head. Luke probably would value as wide an audience as he could get.

And Richard Baucom and others have shown that probably works like the Gospels desired a wider audience than sometimes redaction critics thought where they focused on a particular local community. At the same time, this can also be carried too far because people normally have a target audience. They have a core audience in mind.

There are certain expectations that they have, certain people that they envision getting this message in particular or take for granted who will listen to this message in particular. It's interesting that even though the book is dedicated to the Theophilus, the most excellent Theophilus is, therefore a person of high rank and status. Luke acts, and especially the first volume, the book of the Gospel of Luke, is one of the strongest places in the New Testament challenging riches and saying we need to use all of our resources to serve the poor.

At the same time, Luke presupposes a fairly educated, well-to-do audience, not elite. Elite audiences could afford multi-volume historical works, although Luke isn't trying to write the whole history of humanity. He's just writing the history of the mission of the church.

But he leaves out a whole lot of things we would love to know. Luke's audience seems to be aware of a lot of names. He takes for granted a wide geographic knowledge, especially in the Aegean region, but elsewhere as well.

He dedicates the book to Theophilus, most excellent Theophilus. Now some have spoken of Theophilus as the ideal reader of the book of Acts. The dedicatee wasn't normally just one's core audience.

One would dedicate a book to a wealthy patron often or a sponsor or somebody that you hoped would like the book and therefore provided a good circulation. So Theophilus wasn't like the core audience, but Theophilus was part of the audience. And Luke seems to assume a higher level, more sophisticated audience in terms of education than Mark did.

And probably in terms of the Hellenistic diaspora than Matthew or John did. Luke's style varies between Greek literary prose style and a Greek that's heavily influenced by the Septuagint, a kind of dialect of Greek. Some have called it Jewish Greek.

Others have pointed out, well, that's just ordinary Koine. The Jewish Greek of the period was just ordinary Koine. But ordinary Koine is not Greek literary prose style exactly.

So, Luke kind of varies in between those. And there are places where he's clearly echoing the Septuagint or the style of the Septuagint, particularly when he's recounting traditional scenes like in Luke chapters one and two. And some have also found a lot of Semitisms there and in the first 15 chapters of Acts.

My thinking is that that's probably either echoing his sources or that it's just echoing the style of the Septuagint in which Luke was very obviously immersed. And his sources were obviously immersed in that. And many of the sources for those sections may have been bilingual.

Aramaic speaking and Greek speaking. And so, you may have some idioms that carry over as well. My wife is from Congo and she speaks five languages.

And sometimes idioms from one language will carry over into another language. The focus of Acts. The geographic focus is often on urban centers in contrast to Jesus' public ministry, which often took place in rural Galilee.

The Book of Acts takes place often in urban centers. Luke often reports the conversion of elites, although it wasn't just elites who were interested in that. If you belong to a marginalized outside group that's not well looked upon in society, it is to your advantage to be able to cite a few people here and there.

Well, look, we have some professors or we have some rich people or whatever as well. So don't look down on us. But in any case, the early Christian movement was a minority movement.

It was marginalized. And so, they would have appreciated this. But he does often mention the conversion of elites, although he's also quite interested in showing God's concern for the poor.

The geographic areas that are particularly focused on in the Book of Acts, once it moves outside of Judea, where it began, Greece, Macedonia, Hellenistic Asia, which is primarily Greek speaking areas of Asia Minor, although he also includes some others, and ultimately to Rome, which was the heart of the empire in which Luke's audience lived. So, it's not surprising Luke cares about that because he knows his audience is going to care especially about that, rather than tracing the mission elsewhere, where the gospel also traveled. He's most detailed in Philippi, and that would make sense if the author did in fact stay in Philippi for a long time, as the Wii narrative suggests.

When he's thinking of an audience, well, he knows the believers in Philippi are going to be interested in this work. And they may be, at least in the back of his head, as a key core audience. Well, was the audience Jewish or Gentile? Gentile Christians were still viewed widely as converts to Judaism.

And there was an emphasis on the conversion of Gentiles, not any concerted missions movement, but there was a valuing of making proselytes. The Jerusalem church was still viewed as authoritative. So certain things had to be settled there, like in Acts 15.

Luke presupposes a strong knowledge of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. I should say the standard, most common form of the Greek translation of the Old Testament in this period. So probably his core audience is an audience that is very knowledgeable in scripture.

That doesn't necessarily mean they're Jewish. That has been argued and some good arguments have been put forth for it. But I still think with the majority of scholars, these could be Gentile converts to this Jewish faith in the Messiah.

Actually, the diaspora congregations were mixed, so Jewish and Gentile, but probably to the churches. Now we need to ask the question about the date. Some have argued for an early date.

I mean, nobody argues for a date before the end of the book of Acts, obviously. So, nobody argues for something before around the year 62. But the earlier date is the date argued, well, it's written by Paul's companion.

Paul had many junior companions, but Paul was martyred somewhere around the year 64. Some dated as late as 67, but under Nero's persecution, which began in the year 64. If Luke outlived Paul only by a decade, that would push it to the mid-70s of the first century.

The strongest argument that's been offered in favor of the earlier date is that Acts does not close with Paul's death. But keep in mind that the focus of Acts, Acts isn't a biography per se. Acts is focused on mission.

Some people have noted biographic elements in Acts, and I concede those. But it's not one whole work on one single person. Paul isn't even mentioned until Acts chapter nine.

So even though I see biographic elements in Acts, it's not a biography per se. It's talking about the early Christian mission, and therefore it doesn't have to end with Paul's death. In fact, Luke seems very happy to emphasize positive legal precedents.

And Paul's execution would not be such a positive precedent. It would also be a tragic ending for the book rather than having a positive upturn. Luke likes to end on positive notes.

He ends the Gospel of Luke certainly on a positive note. And he ends the book of Acts in a similar analogous way. Well, another argument for an early date is that the Jewish influence with Rome that you see in Acts was only before the year 70.

So, this must have been written before the year 70. I think that argument is not very good because Jewish influence continued in some places like Asia Minor, far beyond that. Revelation chapters two and three suggest that as well.

So, talking about a later date from between 70 and 90, this is where the majority of scholars fall. The second leading group is the group in the 60s we've just mentioned. But the majority of scholars date Luke in the 70s or 80s.

Here are some of the reasons for that. Luke chapter 21 looks like it was written after 70. It adjusts the language.

In Mark 13, it looks like Jesus may come back at the same time that the temple is destroyed. Matthew chapter 24 qualifies that somewhat by clarifying the nature of the disciples' questions. So, it's really two questions.

When will these things be? When will the temple be destroyed in the one hand? And what will be the sign of your coming at the end of the age on the other? Well, Luke also clarifies it so that the desolating sacrilege instead he mentions when you see

Jerusalem surrounded by armies. And it's pretty clear that there he's talking about 70 because he talks about people being carried away as captives, as slaves among all the nations by Rome. And Jerusalem being trodden down by the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled.

And then he talks about the Lord's coming. You'll look up, your redemption draws near. So many think that this clarification, Luke is just making it more explicit after the fact, after the year 70.

Viewing Jerusalem's destruction through the template of Babylon was very common after 70. Although viewing Rome as a new Babylon actually went earlier than that as well. Also, there seems to be in the plot development some echoes of what happened in 70.

I mean, Jesus in Luke chapter 19 and elsewhere seems to be pleading with Jerusalem to turn while there's still time. But in the book of Acts, we also have that. And in Acts chapters 21 and 22, Paul's speech in Acts chapter 22 can be viewed as a final plea to the Jerusalemites, the nationalistic Jerusalemites.

Not to choose the course of violence against the Gentiles, but to be open to peace. Even though it was the Gentiles who were provoking it, the course of nationalistic militant resistance ultimately led to a terrible tragedy and the destruction of Jerusalem. And it looks to me, having worked through the text as if Luke is responding to those kinds of events.

Some people say, well, why isn't the destruction of Jerusalem narrated? Well, you know, if you're talking about something in 1910 and you're writing it in 1930 after World War I, you're not necessarily going to mention World War I because your narrative ends in 1910. It ended before World War I happened. And in the same way, he doesn't have to narrate it as having happened.

He narrates it as being prophesied as happening. And we know from within the narrative that Jesus' prophecies come true, just like the second coming will come true. So, a traveling companion can still fit in the 70s and 90s.

Again, most of his traveling companions were probably younger than he was. They were junior traveling companions, except for Barnabas and Silas, who seemed to have been peers. Another plank in the 70 to 90 argument is that Luke used Mark as a source.

It's pretty clear. He cleans up Mark's grammar. Mark wouldn't take Luke and then use more street-level grammar when people really respected the higher level grammar, higher in terms of what was considered higher grammatically in that day.

Luke used Mark as a source. And we know that Luke used sources. He tells us that point blank in Luke chapter one.

Mark may have been written around the year 64. Scholars usually date Mark between 64 and 75. I favor the earlier date for Mark.

Actually, we don't know. It's possible Mark could have been written long before that. It could have been written in the 40s, some have suggested.

But probably from what we have from Papias, if Mark got these things from Peter, probably he got them from Peter when he was with him in Rome. And that being the case, a date in the 60s, before Peter's martyrdom, probably somewhere around 64, makes sense for Mark. Although Mark could have published after he got the material.

But in any case, if we take a date in the 60s, we have to leave time for Mark to be in circulation enough for Luke to have it as an available source. So, sometime after 70 makes sense. Now, some have argued for a very late date.

Some have argued that based on dependence on Josephus because Josephus also mentioned some of the things that we have in Acts. But I look at it this way. If Josephus is not simply making up those events that he narrates, then these were events that were already known and other people besides Josephus could know about them.

You didn't have to wait for Josephus to write about them, to know about them. Also, the place where he corresponds most closely with Josephus in terms of Judas, the Galilean, and Thutis, he contradicts Josephus, which doesn't very much sound like he's depending on Josephus at that point.

Now, some have dated, these are the people mainly that I'm talking about here, who dated Acts in the 90s. Of the number of scholars, if you take a survey, and this is in flux, so I'm taking this survey based on information, actually, especially from somebody who dates it in the second century. His survey of what were the majority views, according to his survey that was done maybe 10 years ago, from the time that I'm speaking, the majority view was between 70 and 90. The second leading view was in the 60s.

The third leading view was in the 90s.

And the least view was in the second century. Now, the second-century view has increased since then because of two scholars who have written particularly on that.

Richard Pervo and Joseph Tyson. Tyson dates it later than Richard Pervo does, and he thinks it's related to Marcion in the second century. There are not very many scholars who go that far, especially because you can't really separate Luke and Acts that much.

Richard Pervo does separate them, although he acknowledges a common author. But for those of us who think it's Luke-Acts that they're meant to be read together, because especially Acts 1:1 refers to the previous volume, basically the way that a historian would write a second volume, starting by alluding to the previous volume. If Luke and Acts are tied together, you can't date Acts too many decades later than you date the Gospel of Luke.

And we have reasons to date the Gospel of Luke in the first century. And also, because I argue for a traveling companion of Paul, which again, detractors of that view have also acknowledged that that is the majority view. So, I think that the very late date suffers from a number of weaknesses.

Certainly, if it was a traveling companion of Paul, you can't date it in the time of Marcion. Now, I have another reason for arguing for a fairly early date. And this reason has to do with something that I argue in terms of the purpose of the book, which I'll come to later in more detail.

But I believe, and I didn't believe this when I started working on my commentary on Acts, I knew of the view, but I didn't hold it. But after working through Acts, I adopted this view because it was clear to me the last quarter of Acts is Paul in captivity. Luke is with him.

It's very important to Luke. That's one reason that section is so detailed. But you know, you don't have some of the characteristics you have in other sections.

You don't have very many signs and wonders, although you do have them coming up. Most of the speeches are defense speeches, and apologetic speeches. And you say, well, what's the purpose of that? Luke has an apologetic agenda throughout the gospel and throughout Acts.

In his first volume, it shows that Jesus was innocent of any charges that would have made him rightly condemned as a traitor against the Roman Empire, as somebody leading a revolt against the Roman Empire. Jesus was innocent of that. Probably, since he's writing to believers, probably the majority of them agree with him on that.

Some people have argued that Acts is written like a legal brief. It's actually not written like a legal brief, but it does include the kind of issues that would have come up in a legal brief, which wouldn't be a full-fledged narrative like this. But if you go

through the book of Acts, one-quarter of the book of Acts is, you know, Paul in custody, Paul defending himself in custody.

And the charges against Paul that are most damaging, for which some evidence could be raised, is that Paul instigated riots. This is a charge of sedition, Acts 24 verse 5. And you look through the rest of Acts and Luke mentions riots in many of the places that Paul ministered. Now, if you're defending Paul against that charge, why are you going to even mention the riots? Well, presumably he had to because the riots were known.

So, what Luke does is show that Paul didn't instigate the riots. And you read Paul's letters, he's not the kind of person who would have instigated riots. That wasn't his agenda.

But apparently, people had accused him of that. And Luke shows that no, it's not Paul. It's his very accusers, the people who wanted to get Paul in trouble, who were guilty of instigating the riots.

Now, that's interesting because it was a common defense technique in antiquity to turn the charges against your accusers. Now, why would that be an issue decades after Paul's death? I believe that this would be most relevant in a time when the charges against Paul were still fresh. That would work for a date in the 60s, which is not what I'm arguing for.

But if you want to argue Paul's still alive, you know, obviously he would need a defense then. But he would need it probably more in the form of a defense brief rather than a full narrative as we have in Luke-Acts. But soon after Paul's death, the charges are still fresh.

These charges reflect not only on Paul, but they reflect on the diaspora churches because Paul was considered the leader of the Gentile mission. And so, you know, if Paul is reviled, Paul is accused of being a criminal, that looks bad for all the churches. You read this in letters in the New Testament.

In 2 Timothy, it speaks of this, you know, this person was not ashamed of my chains. Philippians chapter 1 speaks of those who just wanted to cause Paul trouble in prison, but Paul was being tried for the defense of the gospel. So, it looks like the legacy of Paul and the legacy of the diaspora mission were connected together.

There were some people who wanted to dissociate from Paul because of his imprisonment. Because of his execution. But Luke in his parallel volumes may be suggesting that just as Jesus was innocent, Paul was innocent also.

It was a corruption of justice in both cases for political reasons. And therefore we should not dissociate ourselves from Paul, but we should recognize that what he did was good. If that's the case, probably this is written at a time when Paul's legacy was still contested.

Probably not around the time that 1 Clement was written in the 90s, but probably in the 70s or possibly 80s. So, I would argue for a date in the 70s. Now, none of these dates are certain.

So, I'm just giving you arguments for why I think certain things are likelier than others. 60s is possible. 80s is possible.

The 90s, I think, is pushing it. The second century, I don't think is likely at all. The 70s, I think, is the most likely of the dates.

And, you know, many evangelical scholars, of whom I'm one, dated in the 70s. Some have said evangelical scholars dated in the 60s. Well, some do.

Some date it later. Ben Whittington dates it a bit later than I do. But F.F. Bruce, who laid out the argument for a pre-70 date, particularly cogently, in his third edition of his *Axe Commentary*, changed his view to a post-70 date.

So, I'm just saying this so that those of you who have heard that everybody who, everybody should date it in the 60s, just to let you know. I do have company dating it afterward. In any case, whenever you date it, the genre is the genre of history.

All history was written with a purpose. History could be entertaining, but it also had to be informative. History, at least if it was written for the elite, it needed to show rhetorical artistry.

And Luke has some of that, although not the kind that you find in elite works. So, people wrote it to be entertaining so you would enjoy reading it, but it had to be based on information. Novels had to be entertaining, but they didn't have to be based on information.

Another element of history was that it needed to have accuracy. That doesn't mean necessarily precision on all details. But it does mean that it had to be substantially accurate.

There have been other proposals besides the proposal of history. Biography has been proposed. Charles Talbert, a brilliant scholar who reinvigorated the thesis of biography and the gospels, rightly so, and Richard Burridge pretty much in his Cambridge monograph showed that that did fit the gospels.

And the majority of scholars now agree with that. Talbert has also argued for that with the Book of Acts because there's a focus on major characters. It also fits the Gospel of Luke, the first volume.

So, you have a continuity between Jesus and Peter and Paul. And we'll see more of that later that Talbert rightly points out. Talbert argues for biographic succession narratives, especially in philosophic biography, that sometimes you will have a key figure and then you have succession narratives with other figures.

There were biographies that had multiple people in them, but normally you didn't have a single volume like the Book of Acts with a focus just on Peter in the first part and Paul in the second part. So, the majority of scholars don't think it's biography. It doesn't end with Paul's or Peter's death.

And also, you have a biographic focus in much of ancient historiography. One of the ways you could write ancient history was with a biographic focus, focusing on major characters. Multi-volume histories sometimes include one or more volumes focused on a single character.

So, you had multi-volume histories that were written by a number of authors and they would have, say, a volume or two volumes on Alexander the Great in their history. Succession narratives also appear not just in biography. And especially when you just have philosophic lists of successors, that's not as strong.

But we do have some successive biographies. So, while I agree with the majority of scholars that Acts is a historical monograph, biography was kind of a subtype of history and there are many helpful elements in Talbert's proposal. There's a biographic focus in the way that Luke does his history.

It fits also what we have in Parallel Lives, parallel biographies of some ancient figures. So, there could be some overlap. I see it as kind of a biographic approach to historiography.

In the next session, we will look at some of the other proposals for the genre of Acts, including novels, and come back to, again, the majority proposal and the one for which I argue, namely that the Book of Acts is a historical monograph.

This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Acts. This is session 1, Authorship, Date, and Genre.